

White-backed Swallow in the South-West.—Serventy & Whittell (*Birds of Western Australia*, 1976: 322) comment on the southward expansion of the range of the White-backed Swallow (*Chaeramoeca leucosterna*); their southernmost locality is between Bannister and Williams. On the Swan Coastal Plain, N. Kolichis (*West. Aust. Nat.*, 14, 1979: 131) and P. Curry (*West. Aust. Nat.*, 14, 1979: 157) record it south of the Swan River. On 9 November 1979 I observed 5 birds flying over a paddock 11 km west-southwest of Denmark, indicating that this species occasionally wanders to the south coast.

The distribution of this species in the South-West would accord with the map in Figs. 8 and 9, pp. 58-59 in Serventy & Whittell, cited above. This Swallow is outflanking the dense forest belt indicated by these authors. The birds which are invading along the northern corridor have reached the Swan River district and those along the southern corridor are now prospecting as far south as Denmark.

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The first record of the Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* from Australia.—At about 1000 hrs on November 7, 1979 I found a freshly dead *Phylloscopus* on Sandy Island, an unvegetated exposed sandbank on Scott Reef, W.A. (14°03'S, 121°46'E). Rigor mortis was only starting to set in so probably the bird had died overnight or early in the morning. The bird was found lying underneath the platform of a large automatic weather station. A check of the body tissue and skeletal elements, made while preparing the specimen as a study skin, did not indicate that it had suffered injury or death from impact. Its gizzard was empty except for some grit. Though light in weight, the bird did not appear very emaciated and small quantities of subcutaneous fat were present.

The bird, a subadult on skull ossification, could not be accurately sexed. It was not in moult. The specimen has been lodged with the Western Australian Museum (reg. no. A16285). I suspected it was *Phylloscopus borealis* and a check of King and Dickinson (1975) showed that this was so on the basis of plumage, measurements, the presence of a non-emarginated 5th primary, the comparative shortness of the 10th primary, the wing formula whereby the 9th primary fell between the 5th and 4th primaries, and the presence of a wing bar. A further check using the key in Williamson (1962) also confirmed the specific identification as *P. borealis*. The specimen is referable to the nominate form on the basis of breast coloration and bill length.

P. b. borealis breeds from arctic Norway and Finland east across northern Russia to the Bering Sea. It occurs on passage through most of eastern China, Japan and northern Indo-Chinese countries to winter quarters through much of S.E. Asia including Indonesia east to the Moluccas. Other subspecies breed in Japan and Alaska. The species is a regular vagrant to Western Europe so its apparent overshooting into Australian territory is not surprising and in fact has been predicted (McKean *et al.*, 1975). Its preference in wintering quarters for wooded areas including mangroves (Medway and Wells, 1976) which in northern Australia harbour superficially similar *Gergone* species together with the scarcity of competent bird watchers in the region would lessen the chance of the species being detected if it occurs regularly in small numbers.

REFERENCES

- KING, Ben F. and Edward F. DICKINSON. 1975. *A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia* 480 pp. Houghton Mifflin: Boston.
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MEDWAY, Lord and David R. WELLS. 1976. *The Birds of the Malay Peninsula*, vol. 5. 448 pp. Witherby: London.

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